

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**

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F 1

1. (currently amended) An implant for intervertebral fusion between opposing vertebrae, said implant comprising:

- an implant body having a first end and a second end spaced along a longitudinal axis of the body, said first end having a first diameter and said second end having a second diameter wherein the second diameter is larger than the first diameter; and
- said implant body comprising first and second load bearing surfaces extending between the first and second ends of the implant body and being spaced apart by a central support member, the central support member having a width narrower than a width of the first and second load bearing surfaces, wherein the width of the first and second load bearing surfaces extends between the first and second ends of the implant body, wherein the central support member is coextensive with a midline of the implant body extending along the longitudinal axis, wherein said body is generally substantially "I" shaped in cross-section.

2-35 (canceled)

36. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces are non-continuous.

P 2  
37. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said body is tapered at least at said first end.

38. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein a distance between the first and second load bearing surfaces varies along the longitudinal axis.

39. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein the diameter of the second end is greater than a diameter of the implant at at least one other point along the longitudinal axis.

F3 40. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces taper toward one another from said second end to said first end.

F3 41. (previously presented) The implant of claim 40, wherein said body tapers at an angle of 8°.

42. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces include portions of a helical thread pattern.

43. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces include a pattern for anchoring to a vertebral body.

44. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said central support member extends from said first end to said second end of said implant.

45. (previously presented) The implant of claim 44, wherein said central support member includes at least one opening therethrough.

46. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said central support member comprises a plurality of columns.

47. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said central support member passes through a single plane between diametrically opposed regions of said first and second load bearing surfaces.

48. (canceled)

F5 49. (currently amended) An implant for intervertebral fusion between opposing vertebrae, said implant comprising:

- an implant body having a first end and a second end, said body having first and second load bearing surfaces extending along a longitudinal axis of the body from the first end to the second end, the first and second load bearing surfaces having a width extending perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, said first and second load bearing surfaces having a midline extending along the longitudinal axis, said first and second load bearing surfaces being spaced apart by a first height at the first end and a second height at the second end, wherein the first height is less than the second height; and

PS - said implant body comprising a ~~central support member~~ plurality of columns connecting the first and second load bearing surfaces along their midlines, the ~~central support member~~ columns having a width narrower than the width of the first and second load bearing surfaces, wherein the plurality of columns are aligned one behind another along the longitudinal axis.

FL 50. (previously presented) The implant of claim 40, wherein the implant body has a continuous taper from the second end to the first end.

51-52 (canceled)

FTG 53. (previously presented) The implant of claim 1, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces form open channels on each side of the central support member, extending from the first end of the implant body to the second end of the implant body.

54. (previously presented) The implant of claim 49, wherein, said first and second load bearing surfaces include portions of a helical thread pattern.

55. (previously presented) The implant of claim 54, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces are threaded from the first end of the body to the second end of the body.

56. (currently amended) An implant for intervertebral fusion between opposing vertebrae, said implant comprising:

- an implant body having a first end and a second end spaced along a longitudinal axis of the body, said first end having a first diameter and said second end having a second diameter wherein the second diameter is larger than the first diameter; and
- said implant body comprising first and second load bearing surfaces extending between the first and second ends of the implant body and being spaced apart by a central support member, wherein the first and second load bearing surfaces taper toward one another from said second end to said first end;
- said central support member having a width narrower than a width of the first and second load bearing surfaces, wherein the width of the first and second load bearing surfaces extends between the first and second ends of the implant body;
- said central support member being coextensive with a midline of the implant body extending along the longitudinal axis, wherein said body is generally substantially "I" shaped in cross-section, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces form open channels on each side of the central support member, extending from the first end of the implant body to the second end of the implant body.

57. (currently amended) An implant for intervertebral fusion between opposing vertebrae, said implant comprising:

- an implant body having a first end and a second end, said body having first and second load bearing surfaces extending along a longitudinal axis of the body from the first end to the second end, the first and second load bearing surfaces having a width extending perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, said first and second load bearing surfaces having a midline extending along the longitudinal axis, said first and second load bearing surfaces being spaced apart by a first height at the first end and a second height at the second end, wherein the first height is less than the second height, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces taper toward one another from said second end to said first end, said first and second load bearing surfaces including portions of a helical thread pattern;
- said implant body comprising a central support member connecting the first and second load bearing surfaces along their midlines, the central support member having a width narrower than the width of the first and second load bearing surfaces; and

~~18~~ - said first and second load bearing surfaces having opposing inner surfaces forming open channels on each side of the central support member, extending from the first end of the implant body to the second end of the implant body.

58. (new) An implant for intervertebral fusion between opposing vertebrae, said implant comprising:

~~18~~ - an implant body having a first end and a second end, said body having first and second load bearing surfaces extending along a longitudinal axis of the body from the first end to the second end, the first and second load bearing surfaces having a width extending perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, said first and second load bearing surfaces having a midline extending along the longitudinal axis; and

- said implant body comprising a plurality of columns connecting the first and second load bearing surfaces along their midlines, the columns having a width narrower than the width of the first and second load bearing surfaces, wherein the plurality of columns are aligned one behind another along the longitudinal axis.

59. (new) The implant of claim 58, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces have at least two openings.

60. (new) The implant of claim 58, wherein said first and second load bearing surfaces have opposing inner surfaces forming open channels on each side of the columns.

61. (new) An implant for intervertebral fusion between opposing vertebrae, said implant comprising:

- an implant body having a first end and a second end, said body having first and second load bearing surfaces extending along a longitudinal axis of the body from the first end to the second end, the first and second load bearing surfaces having a width extending perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, said first and second load bearing surfaces having a midline extending along the longitudinal axis, said first and second load bearing surfaces having opposing inner surfaces; and

18 - said implant body comprising a central support member connecting the first and second load bearing surfaces along their midlines, the central support member having a width narrower than the width of the first and second load bearing surfaces; wherein the opposing inner surfaces of the first and second load bearing surfaces form channels on either side of the central support member.

62. (new) The implant of claim 61, said channels extending along either side of the central support member from the first end of the body to the second end of the body.